

IOWA BIRD LIFE

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

VOL. VIII

MARCH, 1938

NO. 1



OFFICERS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

President—Myrle L. Jones, Pomeroy, Iowa

Vice-President—Dr. Warren N. Keck, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Sec'y-Treas.—Miss Kate E. LaMar, 1231 39th St.,
Des Moines, Iowa

Editor—Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop, Iowa

Executive Council:

Mrs. E. J. Petranek, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Dr. Winifred Gilbert, Cedar Falls, Iowa

Mrs. Billy Williams, Atlantic, Iowa

Ex-officio Council Members (Past Presidents):

Walter M. Rosene

Walter W. Bennett

Arthur J. Palas

Dr. F. L. R. Roberts

Dr. George O. Hendrickson

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; 'The Bulletin,' 1929-1930; 'Iowa Bird Life,' beginning 1931.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Iowa, \$1.00 a year (includes membership dues). Outside of Iowa, 50c a year. Special rate for all libraries, 50c a year. Single copies 15c each. (Keep the Editor informed of your correct address.)

EDITORIAL AND PUBLICATION OFFICE
WINTHROP, IOWA



NESTING OF THE AMERICAN BITTERN

The upper view shows the nest and eggs of the American Bittern, in Clay County, Iowa, June, 1933. The Bittern is shown on this nest in the lower view. Photographs by Logan J. Bennett.

THE 1934 SPRING MIGRATION OF SOME BIRDS
THROUGH CLAY AND PALO ALTO COUNTIES, IOWA*

By LOGAN J. BENNETT

U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey**

In connection with waterfowl research in Clay and Palo Alto Counties, Iowa, the writer recorded the migration dates and approximate numbers of some species of birds, particularly those frequenting water areas, throughout the spring of 1934. The area in which the observations were made is called the Ruthven Area by those people who have been engaged in wildlife research at Iowa State College in recent years. The area is within the Wisconsin Glaciation and contains a larger remnant of potholes, marshes, sloughs, and lakes than any similar area in the state.

The writer resided in the Ruthven Area in 1934 from March 12 until late in the following fall. About 40 miles were driven in an automobile each day during the migratory period to estimate the bird population on the respective water areas. Approximate numbers were derived by spot-checking flocks and rafts with calibrated binoculars. The figures were often checked with complete counts to determine discrepancies. Actual counts were made and recorded in most cases on those species that were present in numbers less than 100.

A more complete paper on the migration of shore birds for the spring of 1934 has been published (Bennett, 1935). The writer has not observed any other region in Iowa where such large numbers of water birds can be seen. On March 20, 1934, Philip A. DuMont and the writer conservatively estimated that there were at least 1,000,000 Pintails in Clay, Palo Alto, Emmet, and Dickinson Counties. This example of large numbers is given merely to indicate to Iowa nature students what is in store for them if they make a visit to the Ruthven Area between March 20 and April 20. The wide variety of water depths, from closed marshes to open lakes, offers almost ideal resting and feeding conditions for all migratory water birds that are likely to pass through Iowa.

The big flocks of migratory birds arrive in northwestern Iowa each spring as soon as the lakes begin to become free of ice. Year after year the melting ice leaves open water about March 20. The appearance of open water has not missed that date by many days within the memory of old settlers. Lyle Van Vleck, Ruthven, Iowa, informed the writer that in the days of market hunting and spring shooting the hunters planned on being at the lakes on March 20 for the beginning of the spring duck harvest. The opening of the lakes and the myriads of temporary potholes in the adjacent fields and pastures caused by the spring thaw attracted the water birds in almost unbelievable numbers. Today the same area is even more important to waterfowl, as the rest of the State has but a few scattered lakes and marshes left.

Literature Cited

Bennett, Logan J.

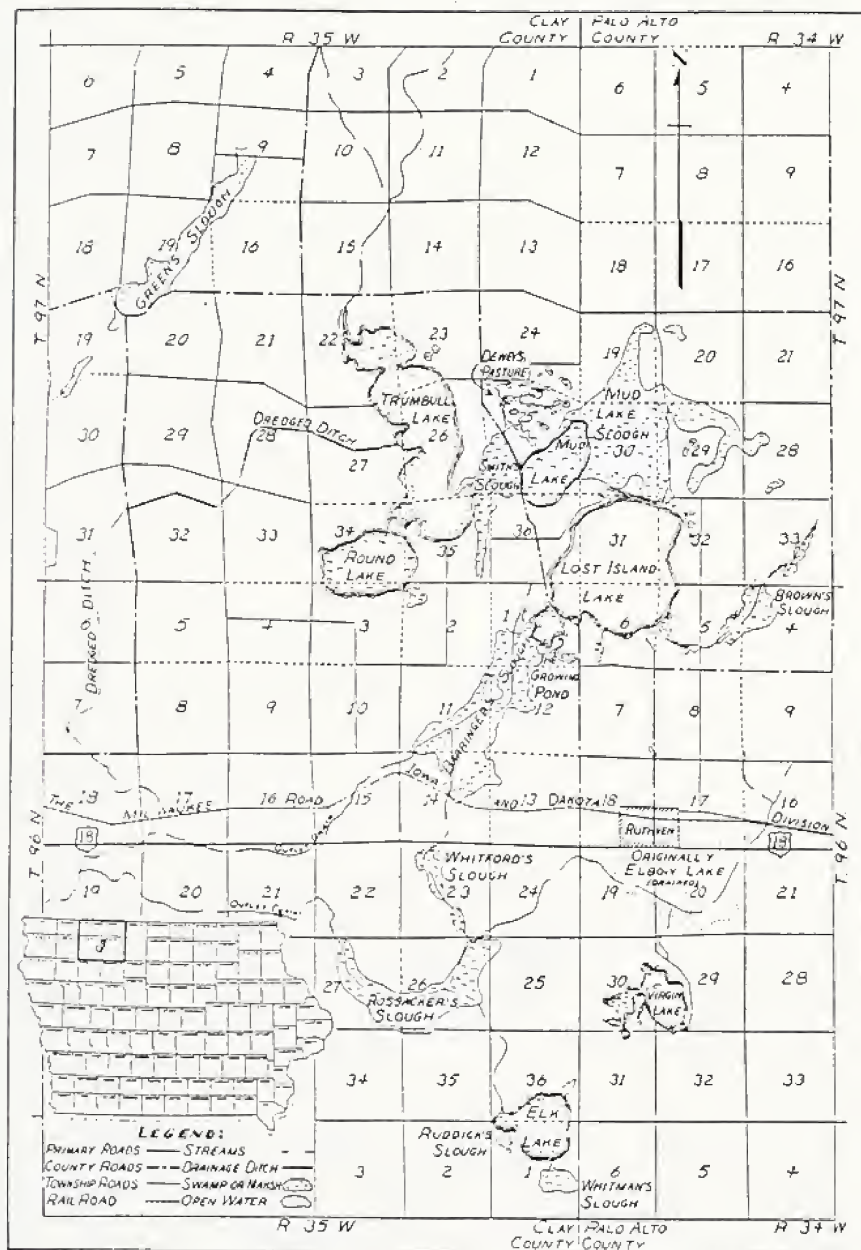
1935. The 1934 Spring Migration of Shore Birds Through Clay and Palo Alto Counties, Iowa. Iowa State College Journal of Science, Vol. IX, No. 4, 1935, pp. 609-616.

*Journal Paper No. J-537 of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station, Ames, Iowa, Project 496.

**Iowa State College, Iowa Conservation Commission, and the U. S. Bureau of Biological Survey co-operating with the American Wildlife Institute.

MIGRATION DATA ON SOME BIRDS THROUGH CLAY AND
PALO ALTO COUNTIES, SPRING OF 1934

Species	Date first seen	Main flight	Date last seen	Number seen
Lesser Loon	April 10	No data	No data	30
Eared Grebe	April 20	No data	Nesting*	85
Pied-billed Grebe	April 14	April 29	Nesting	800
Double-crested Cormorant	April 30	No data	No data	24
American Bittern	April 22	May 15-19	Nesting	600
Canada Goose	March 19	April 17	May 5	5,000
White-fronted Goose	April 6	April 12	April 30	200
Snow Goose	March 19	April 16	May 2	20,000
Blue Goose	March 19	April 15	May 1	30,000
Mallard	March 15	Mar. 20-May 15	Nesting	400,000
Black Duck	March 20	No data	No data	100
Gadwall	April 4	April 19	April 28	10,000
Baldpate	April 2	April 19	April 28	8,000
American Pintail	March 15	Mar. 20-May 15	Nesting	1,000,000+
Green-winged Teal	March 20	April 14	April 28	8,000
Blue-winged Teal	April 7	April 25	Nesting	20,000
Shoveller	March 23	April 13	Nesting	15,000
Redhead	March 20	April 8	Nesting	1,000
Ring-necked Duck	March 20	April 12	May 1	8,000
Canvasback	March 15	April 9	Nesting	300
Lesser Scaup	March 15	April 13-17	April 25	20,000
American Golden-eye	March 19	March 31	April 13	300
Bufflehead	April 9	April 13	April 13	50
Ruddy Duck	April 14	April 18	Nesting	500
Hooded Merganser	April 10	No data	No data	40
American Merganser	March 18	April 10	April 20	100
Red-breasted Merganser	March 18	No data	No data	60
Eastern Red-tailed Hawk	March 23	No data	Nesting	20
Marsh Hawk	March 22	April 10	Nesting	200
Osprey	April 30	No data	May 2	2
Duck Hawk	April 13	No data	May 3	3
Western Pigeon Hawk	March 23	(only one seen)		1
Eastern Sparrow Hawk	April 6	No data	Nesting	500
Greater Prairie Chicken	Wintering**	March 20	April 6	4,000
American Coot	March 20	April 23-25	Nesting	30,000
Piping Plover	May 3	May 3-19	May 19	11
Semipalmated Plover	May 2	May 14	June 5	200
Killdeer	March 16	April	Nesting	500
American Golden Plover	May 7	May 7	May 28	14
Black-bellied Plover	April 27	May 28	June 1	41
Ruddy Turnstone	May 11	May 22	June 2	52
Wilson's Snipe	April 22	Apr. 24-May 2	May 16	500
Upland Plover	May 5	May 11	Nesting	35
Spotted Sandpiper	May 1	May 22	Nesting	75
East'n Solitary Sandpiper	May 21	May 22	June 1	40
Western Willet	May 1	May 7-11	May 16	6
Greater Yellowlegs	April 6	Apr. 18-28	May 5	150
Lesser Yellowlegs	April 8	April 28	June 3	300
American Knot	May 21	(One flock of 14 observed)		14
Pectoral Sandpiper	April 2	May 21	June 2	800
White-rumped Sandpiper	May 12	May 22	June 3	400
Baird's Sandpiper	May 10	May 14	May 23	250
Least Sandpiper	April 19	May 21	June 1	500
Red-backed Sandpiper	May 7	May 22-24	June 7	1,000
Dowitcher	May 10	May 14	May 22	133
Stilt Sandpiper	May 7	May 24	June 7	300



THE RUTHVEN AREA

(Courtesy of Collegiate Press, Ames, Iowa)

Species	Date first seen	Main flight	Date last seen	Number seen
Semipalmated Sandpiper	May 3	May 15	June 3	1,000
Western Sandpiper	May 22	(3 were seen on this date)		3
Marbled Godwit	April 28	May 14	June 2	41
Hudsonian Godwit	April 13	May 13-14	May 26	81
Sanderling	May 5	May 23	June 5	28
Avocet	May 13	No data	June 28	2
Wilson's Phalarope	April 22	May 15	May 24	144
Northern Phalarope	May 11	May 21	May 29	250
Parasitic Jaeger	May 28	No data	No data	1
Herring Gull	March 15	April 14	May 10	1,000
Ring-billed Gull	March 16	April 17	May 8	600
Franklin's Gull	April 11	April 21-25	May 12	60,000
Bonaparte's Gull	April 13	April 22	May 10	40,000
Forster's Tern	April 18	May 1-10	Nesting	1,500
Black Tern	May 12	May 15-20	Nesting	3,000
Short-eared Owl	March 19	No data	Nesting	20
Eastern Belted Kingfisher	April 5	No data	Nesting	300
Eastern Bluebird	March 17	No data	Nesting	40
Yellow-headed Blackbird	April 8	April 10-20	Nesting	100,000
Giant Redwing	March 19	April 13	Nesting	500,000
Rusty Blackbird	March 21	No data	No data	5,000
Brewer's Blackbird		No data	No data	10,000
Bronzed Grackle	March 21	No data	Nesting	500,000

Note: **Birds present all winter, first arrivals not evident.

*Nesting birds—last migrants not detected.

BIRDS OF THE SIOUX CITY AREA IN 1936

By BRUCE F. STILES

SIOUX CITY, IOWA

(Concluded from the December, 1937, issue, pp. 49-52.)

Northern Blue Jay. I have no records for January, February or March; numerous records through the rest of the year.

Am. Magpie. My first record is October 9 in Monona County; numerous from then on. See my note in 'Iowa Bird Life' for March, 1937, p. 8.

Eastern Crow. Common through the year. My first nesting record in Woodbury County was April 10 (four eggs). As the Crow sits on the nest it will often "caw" for hours. The sound of a nesting Crow is quite different from the ordinary note, having somewhat of a nasal quality. The syllables are run together monotonously. I have located many nests by following the sound. When disturbed on the nest the Crow does not make a fuss as most birds do; a few squawks as it leaves the nest and the bird is gone. By early October Crows become conspicuously abundant here. They roost in enormous flocks in the wooded areas along the Missouri River. During the late afternoon in the fall and winter months the flocks start congregating, flying in strung-out groups over the willow bars for hours. Shortly before sundown they settle down into the willows by hundreds. I have seen two or three thousand roosting in the tops of the low willow saplings four miles west of Salix, Iowa, lighting in the tops of the small trees in such numbers that the saplings were bent over by their weight. They spend a good hour noisily settling themselves for the night. When disturbed after dark they move on, seeming to fly quite well at night.

In the latter part of October, 1925, while hunting ducks on the bars of the Missouri River, west of New Lake, I shot a crow from an enormous flock about an hour before sundown. The Crow fell wounded

and began cawing. Instead of being frightened, the other Crows swooped down over me by hundreds, many coming within six feet of my gun barrel. Their attitude was distinctly menacing, and the din of their cawing was deafening. I emptied my gun and killed four or five more before they retreated to a safe distance. They milled around for some time, just out of gun range, and then went across the river to the wooded hills on the Nebraska shore.

On March 20, I trapped six. These were banded and released on March 28. A bounty of ten dollars was placed upon each one by the Northwest Iowa Wildlife Conservation League. None was returned. The Crow is intelligent, resourceful and capable. The study of its habits will reveal some most unusual and interesting incidents. I once saw a Crow alight on a fence post, cawing loudly. Finally four other Crows appeared. The first Crow swooped down into the field and picked up something in its bill. It dropped it and alighted on the post again. Each bird alighted in the field and one by one went through the same performance. They finally flew away, cawing at the top of their voices. On examining the spot I found a bottle cap.

Four or five years ago a pure albino Crow was shot east of Lawton, Iowa. The farmer who shot it said it had been around his farm for more than a year, always keeping out of gun range. During the winter a cow died and was left in the field near a haystack. Crows were seen to feed on the carcass, and one morning before daylight the farmer hid himself in the haystack. The albino Crow was there shortly after daylight with a flock of others and the farmer shot it. It was mounted and displayed in a filling station at Moville, Iowa, where I saw it.

Black-capped Chickadee. Records through the year.

White-breasted Nuthatch. Records through the year but more numerous during the winter months.

Brown Creeper. Numerous winter records; latest record, April 10; first fall record, October 9.

Western House Wren. Numerous records from April 28 to September 13.

Catbird. Records from May 17 to September 12.

Brown Thrasher. Records from April 28 to September 13.

Eastern Robin. Records from March 6 to October 21.

Wood Thrush. One seen on May 17; one July 26.

Olive-backed Thrush. One at Riverside on May 17.

Eastern Bluebird. Records for all months except January and February.

Eastern Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Fall records.

Migrant Shrike. Common from March to September.

Starling. Increasing steadily.

Bell's Vireo. Records through the summer.

Red-eyed Vireo. One bird at Riverside, May 17.

Eastern Warbling Vireo. A summer resident.

Tennessee Warbler. One individual at Riverside, May 17.

Eastern Yellow Warbler. Numerous records through the summer; nest with three young and one egg at Sioux City, June 17.

Myrtle Warbler. Numerous in migration, April 17 to May 3, and September 27 to October 17.

Black-poll Warbler. One record for South Ravine Park on May 10.

Yellow-breasted Chat. One bird at Brown's Lake July 18.

Am. Redstart. A migrant and summer resident.

English Sparrow. Common resident.

Bobolink. A record of 10 birds west of Sergeant Bluff on July 21.

Western Meadowlark. Records from March 19 to October 21.

Yellow-headed Blackbird. Common at New Lake during latter April, May and the first half of June; two nests with four eggs each at New Lake on May 31.

Giant Red-wing. Abundant from March 19 to September 27; one record of a female taken at Flower's Island, Monona County, November

15. On May 31 at New Lake I found the following nests in little over an hour: 2 nests with 2 eggs each, 3 nests with 3 eggs each, 10 nests with 4 eggs each, 2 nests with 5 eggs each.

Orchard Oriole. Three birds in Woodbury County on June 14 and one in Monona County on July 19.

Baltimore Oriole. Records through the summer.

Rusty Blackbird. Twenty individuals north of Salix, Iowa, on April

11. I took one specimen, a male, in Monona County on October 7. Brewer's Blackbird. I have a record of two at South Ravine Park, on the outskirts of Sioux City, on October 17.

Bronzed Grackle. Common from mid-March to mid-October.

Eastern Cowbird. Records for all summer months.

Eastern Cardinal. Permanent resident.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Summer resident.

Indigo Bunting. Summer resident.

Dickeissel. Summer resident, common from May 17 to July 21.

Eastern Goldfinch. Permanent resident.

Red-eyed Towhee. Records for April, May and October.

Eastern Lark Sparrow. Summer resident.

Slate-colored Junco. Many records from September 27 to April 11.

Tree Sparrow. Records for fall, winter and early spring.

Eastern Chipping Sparrow. Summer resident.

Clay-colored Sparrow. Two birds in South Ravine, April 28.

Field Sparrow. Common summer resident.

Harris's Sparrow. Many spring and fall records, the latest being October 29.

White-throated Sparrow. Records for May, September and October.

Eastern Fox Sparrow. One record for Union County, South Dakota, on October 20.

Song Sparrow. A record for December 25 at Riverside Park.

Lapland Longspur. I have southeastern South Dakota records for November and December.

THE ANNUAL CONVENTION

The sixteenth annual meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will be held at Cedar Rapids on Friday and Saturday, May 6 and 7. Invitations from the Cedar Rapids Bird Club, Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Hotel Montrose and the Mayor assure us of a warm welcome. The Cedar Rapids Bird Club, coöperating with Dr. Keck of Coe College, have plans well under way for our luncheon, banquet, program at the banquet, field trip, etc.

The Executive Council and officers are planning a well-rounded program of talks by our members, an open forum, and various special features such as a specialist in bird study as our principal speaker, and a Saturday field trip of unusual interest. We trust that the weather man will "give us a break" this year, and the inclement weather which marred the Cedar Rapids meeting in 1931 will not prevail. With favorable weather we are assured of a fine time in a territory abounding in bird life. The element of uncertainty and pleasant surprises in these field trips, together with the association of bird students both expert and amateur from all walks of life, serve to make the field trip a bright spot in this big annual event of the Union.

Anyone wishing to appear on the program should send the title of his talk and information to the President by the first of April. Suggestions for a topic for the open forum will also be appreciated. This is your meeting, your program. We want you to attend. If this is your first convention, we especially urge you to come and get acquainted. If you can appear on the program, we shall be glad to give you a place. A copy of the completed program and announcements will be sent to each member at a later date.—M. L. J.

THE 1937 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS IN IOWA

We present herewith the 1937 Christmas bird census in Iowa. If our readers like the census reports in this tabulated form, we shall no doubt make it an annual feature in our magazine. We do not have space to comment on the absence or presence of various species; but a careful study of the table will reveal many interesting points—the scarcity of the Bob-white, the small numbers of Horned Larks (which became very common in January), the appearance of the Magpie, and the records of Bluebirds, Robins and Meadowlarks due to rather mild weather conditions. Meadowlarks apparently have wintered in Iowa in greater numbers than for several years, judging from many reports. The Starling is on all the lists; from the numbers reported it is increasing rapidly.

Some observers included the English Sparrow and others did not. In order to make the table uniform we decided to omit this species, which is highly domesticated and quite unworthy of a place on a list of wild birds. If we were to include the English Sparrow, it seems we should also list the Rock (Domestic) Dove.

We are indebted to 'Bird-Lore' for five of the Iowa lists (pp. 58-59 in the February, 1938, issue). We like 'Bird-Lore's' practice of including photographs of the census-takers. So far, likenesses of Mrs. Toni Wendelburg, Walter Rosen, Fred Pierce, Dr. T. C. Stephens, M. L. Jones and Miss LaMar (all members of our Union) have appeared in 'Bird-Lore'.

Data on place, time, weather and the observers who reported are given below.

BACKBONE STATE PARK (Delaware Co.): Dec. 20; 8:30 a. m. to 3:30 p. m. Cloudy most of the day, with occasional glimpses of the sun, snow in the air at times; about 10 in. snow, partially ice-encrusted, on the ground with fair sized drifts; temp. 19° at start, same at return; 4 miles on foot in the park, and an auto ride from Winthrop to the park. Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Jones, Paul A. Pierce, F. J. Pierce. ('Bird-Lore')

DES MOINES: Dec. 23; 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. Clear in a. m., cloudy in p. m.; temp. 11° at start, 29° at return; 152 miles by auto, 30 on foot; observers in 5 groups. Brenton's Slough, Fischer's Lake, Morningstar Farm, Beaver Creek, Denman Woods, Brown's Woods, Walnut Woods State Park, Waukonsa Woods and Ashworth Park. Geo. Tonkin, J. F. Thompson, Kate LaMar, H. L. Bump, Mrs. Margaret Lutton, Olivia McCabe, Elizabeth Peck, Jessie Morrison, Mrs. Toni Wendelburg, Edna Rounds, Dwight Smith, A. F. Denboer, Mrs. Harold Johnson, Evangeline Grooters, Mrs. H. R. Peasley. ('Bird-Lore')

DUBUQUE: Dec. 26; 9:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Clear, no wind; 4 in. snow; temp. 14° at start, 30° at return; 12 miles by auto, 6 on foot. Eagle Point Park, Linwood Cemetery, high school grounds, and 5 miles north to bottomlands along Mississippi River. Dubuque Bird Club.

FAIRFIELD: Dec. 25; 2 hrs. during middle of day. Cloudy and raw. On the farm of Ross Parrett, 7 miles west of Fairfield; habitat included fairly heavy woods, open fields, creek, etc. Margaret and Kenneth Parrett, John Bliese.

HARPERS FERRY: Dec. 26; 8 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Clear, no wind; 6 in. snow; temp. -6° at start, 16° at return; 62 miles by auto, 10 on foot. To Dam No. 9, Wexford, Lansing, Waterville and Waukon Junction. A. J. Palas, B. W. Winder. ('Bird-Lore')

OGDEN: Dec. 26; 9 a. m. to 12 m., 1:30 to 5 p. m. Clear, no wind; 1-2 in. snow; temp. 25° at start, 32° at return; 48 miles by auto, 4 on foot. Wooded hillsides and bottom-lands along Des Moines River, open country to Beaver Creek, then to Ledges State Park. W. M. Rosen, Paul Leaverton, Sam Hyde. ('Bird-Lore')

PIERSON: Dec. 26; 8 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Clear, no wind; ground

	Blackbone State Park	Des Moines	Dubuque	Fairfield	Harpers Ferry	Ogden	Pierson	Pomeroy	Sioux City	Tama
Mallard		305								
Baldpate		1								
Scaup Duck									2	
American Merganser			13							4
Red-tailed Hawk		2				2	3	2		
Red-shouldered Hawk		1	1							3
Rough-legged Hawk						1	1		1	3
Marsh Hawk		3								
Sparrow Hawk		4				1				
Bob-white		17	15					17		
Ring-necked Pheasant	5					2	1			1
Mourning Dove		6					9			
Screech Owl		2								2
Great Horned Owl	1	6	3			2		2		
Barred Owl		1	3			2				
Long-eared Owl					1					
Short-eared Owl				1		2	1			
Belted Kingfisher		1							1	
Flicker		38			1		5		10	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	28	3	1	3	8		1	2	4
Red-headed Woodpecker	1			9						
Hairy Woodpecker	2	27			1	2	10	4	9	4
Downy Woodpecker	5	79	2	3	10	8	8	9	16	15
Horned Lark (Prairie)					1			6	35	
Blue Jay	25	47	6	5	35	7	15	8	6	14
American Magpie							1			
Crow	18	2086	310	4		19	67	225	525	54
Chickadee	12	258	28		7	42	32	40	38	30
Tufted Titmouse		20								18
White-breasted Nuthatch	7	87	4	5	17	21	7	13	14	4
Red-breasted Nuthatch					3		2		2	
Brown Creeper	1	17	1	3	1			9	2	1
Robin									26	
Bluebird		4				2				10
Golden-crowned Kinglet		5							4	
Cedar Waxwing		4								
Northern Shrike		1								
Starling	36	157	1	2	48	89	118	17	500	127
Western Meadowlark		5				1	1	2		
Red-winged Blackbird					2	55				
Bronzed Grackle									1	
Cardinal	12	89	12	1	151	8	1	2	2	11
Purple Finch	30	14					4			
Pine Siskin		200								
Goldfinch	35	225			4	12	3		3	3
Slate-colored Junco	150	551	28	17	181	54	28	131	107	145
Tree Sparrow	200	956	30	30	738	120	207	65	34	125
Harris's Sparrow		1					6			
Song Sparrow	1	10		1		1		1		4
Lapland Longspur							4000		1	
Number of species	18	36	16	13	17	24	23	18	23	22
Number of Observers	4	15		3	2	3	5	4	10	3

partly snow-covered; temp. 26° at start, 32° at return; 28 miles by auto, 12 on foot. Two miles west of Pierson, 8 miles east to Ranney's Knob, then down valley of Little Sioux River. W. R. Mills, Paul Osborn, Melvin Treptow, Jack Warner, Harry Williams. ('Bird-Lore')

POMEROY: Dec. 22; 9:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Boy Scouts Enfred Linder, Loran Fricke, Curtis Johnson and Asst. Scoutmaster Harry Telles of Troop 39, Pomeroy.

SIOUX CITY: Dec. 26; 8:15 a. m. to 4:50 p. m. Cloudy in a. m., clear in p. m., no wind; little snow; temp. 18° at start, 38° at return. Stone Park, McCook Lake, Perry Creek road, Missouri River bottoms, Riverside Park. Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Armour, Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Dales, Wilfred Crabb, Leona Keckler, Dr. J. L. and Miss Ruth Schott, Bruce and Mrs. Alice Stiles.

TAMA: Dec. 25; 2 hrs. in a. m., 4 hrs. in p. m. Drove in a circular

direction as much as possible, starting east, then north, then west and home, never more than 5 miles from Tama. Mr. and Mrs. W. G. MacMartin, Miss Bay Brice.

The first national bird census sponsored by 'Bird-Lore' was taken December 25, 1900. Since then it has been an annual event and always a popular and worthwhile feature of the magazine. The first Iowa census for 'Bird-Lore' was taken on December 25, 1903, by Rett E. Olmstead at Decorah, with nine species listed. The next Iowa census was taken two years later and from then on Iowa has been regularly represented. Some statistics gleaned from the Pierce bibliography may be of interest. Since the beginning of 'Bird-Lore's' Christmas census there have been 164 Iowa lists. These represent 25 counties of the state and are distributed among the 32 Iowa cities given in the following list. The dates given are the years in which the census was published, though of course the list was made in December of the preceding year.

Ames: 1924, '25, '26, '27, '28, '29, '31.
Backbone State Park (Delaware Co.): 1924, '33, '34, '35, '36, '37, '38.
Bettendorf: 1916, '18, '21, '22, '23, '24, '31.
Cedar Rapids: 1907, '08, '23.
Davenport: 1918, '24, '26, '34, '35.
Decorah: 1904.
Des Moines: 1911, '12, '23, '24, '25, '26, '27, '28, '29, '30, '31, '32, '33, '34, '35, '36, '37, '38.
Eldora: 1931.
Emmetsburg: 1920, '22, '23, '24.
Grinnell: 1908.
Harpers Ferry: 1938.
Iowa City: 1920, '22, '23, '24, '27.
Keokuk: 1922, '26, '27, '28, '29, '30, '31, '32.
Lanesboro: 1916, '17.
Marion: 1910.
Mt. Vernon: 1910.
National: 1909.
New Hampton: 1922, '25, '26, '30.
Ogden: 1923, '24, '26, '27, '28, '29, '30, '31, '32, '33, '34, '35, '36, '37, '38.
Oskaloosa: 1922, '23.
Pierson: 1922, '23, '24, '25, '26, '27, '28, '29, '30, '31, '33, '34, '35, '36, '37, '38.
Sabula: 1911, '12.
Sigourney: 1928, '29, '30, '31, '32.
Sioux City: 1910, '11, '12, '13, '14, '15, '16, '17, '18, '19, '20, '21, '23, '24, '26, '29, '30, '31, '32, '34, '36, '37.
South English: 1917.
Spirit Lake: 1931.
Tabor: 1926, '27.
Wallingford: 1914, '15.
Wall Lake: 1909, '10, '11, '12, '13, '14, '15.
Waukon: 1907.
Webster: 1931.
Winthrop: 1921, '22, '23, '26, '27, '28, '29, '30, '31, '32.

Without making research into the matter, we believe that Rosen, Mills, and Pierce have taken Christmas censuses over a longer period than any other observers in Iowa. The census just taken was Pierce's eighteenth consecutive Christmas census, and all have been published in 'Bird-Lore'. As the years pass the census trip becomes almost as important an event as the Christmas holiday itself, and we can look back upon many fine trips with congenial companions, in good weather and bad.

--F. J. P.

GENERAL NOTES

Meadowlarks and other Winter Records.—The mild winter just past was responsible for a number of rather unusual records. I saw a Mourning Dove at a farm feed-yard on January 2, 1938; a Meadowlark on January 28 and February 4; a Sparrow Hawk on February 2; a Bronzed Grackle on February 3.—F. J. PIERCE, Winthrop, Iowa.

The Arctic Horned Owl in Chickasaw County.—On October 31, 1937, a farmer killed a male Arctic Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus subarcticus*) eight miles east of Nashua, Chickasaw County, Iowa. Mrs. William H. Kent, who discovered the specimen hanging in front of a doctor's office in Nashua, sent it to me. It was preserved and is now in my collection. DuMont, in 'A Revised List of the Birds of Iowa' (1933), lists three Iowa specimens of this bird.—O. P. ALLERT, Giard, via McGregor, Iowa.

A Winter Kingfisher.—Winter records for the Belted Kingfisher in our locality are quite rare. I was pleasantly surprised to hear one's 'rattle' on January 8, 1938, and, looking overhead, I saw it fly along the river, which is usually open in places due to springs. I had never before seen the Kingfisher here in winter, although I have visited that section of the river every two weeks to place food for the birds for the past three years. There was 2 to 4 inches of snow on the ground, and the temperature for the day was, maximum 12°, minimum 4°.—M. L. JONES, Pomeroy, Iowa.

Meadowlarks and Mourning Doves as Winter Residents.—On December 14, 1937, Borden Buchanan, Cecil Crabb and I saw two Meadowlarks three miles east of James, in Plymouth County, Iowa. These birds were feeding in the tracks of a gravel road on the west side of a hill. We studied them at close range for several minutes. On the same day, about 3½ miles east of Luton in Woodbury County, we saw a flock of about 18 Mourning Doves feeding on a gravel road and sitting in a sheltered place against the bank on the north side. Later the flock flew into a patch of willows, several acres in size, which borders the road. There was about four inches of snow on the ground, temperature was about freezing, and sleet had fallen at intervals all afternoon.—WILFRED D. CRABB, Sioux City, Iowa.

Winter Notes from the Cedar Falls Audubon Society.—On December 27, 1937, ten members of our society went on a field trip. Three members living in Cedar Heights went out in that section, and seven of us went to the cedar grove north of Cedar Falls. We saw flocks of Slate-colored Juncos, Goldfinches, Purple Finches, and Cedar Waxwings, and in smaller numbers the Hairy, Downy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue Jay, Crow, Barred Owl, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Chickadee and Cardinal.

On December 19, 1937, Miss Mabel Hanan and I went to the cedar grove, which is usually an excellent place for winter birds because they find both protection and food there. A light snow was falling, and we found Slate-colored Juncos, Goldfinches and Tree Sparrows in such large flocks we did not even estimate the number. We saw 4 Robins, a large flock of Purple Finches, 7 Red Crossbills, 10 or 12 Starlings, 50 or more Cedar Waxwings with which were a few Bohemian Waxwings, as well as a number of the common winter residents.

Mrs. Warren Tay, a member of our society, reports that the American Magpies are still living on her father's farm in Bremer County. The Magpies have been there continuously for more than a year (see article on their nesting on this farm in 'Iowa Bird Life' for September, 1937, p. 34). She also reports a Meadowlark wintering on that farm.

Mrs. Chas. M. Deal, vice-president of our society, reports that a Bronzed Grackle has been living in their neighborhood in Cedar Heights since the middle of December. It makes daily visits to her foodshelf and to her neighbors' foodshelves.—MRS. RAY S. DIX, Cedar Falls, Iowa, January 12, 1938.

Winter Meadowlarks in Shelby County.—Students in my classes had at various times reported seeing Meadowlarks during the past winter, but I had doubted their information until January 28, 1938, when three boys and I drove out to a place seven miles northeast of Shelby. We stopped on a hill overlooking a meadow and cornfield. Before we had time to get out of the car several Meadowlarks' notes came to our ears. By making a wide circle through the field, we were able to "round up" 22 larks before they took flight over the hill, and there might have been others present. I was near enough to one lark to recognize a dead grasshopper in its bill. All the birds looked as though they had had plenty to eat. Presumably, these were Western Meadowlarks.—IVAN BOYD, Shelby, Iowa.

Winter Meadowlarks in Black Hawk County.—On the morning of December 25, 1937, while driving on the highway near Hudson, I saw two Meadowlarks on the shoulder of the highway. I stopped the car and we walked back to verify our observation. The birds made no attempt to fly but squatted on the snow with their feathers puffed out until they looked like round balls. Returning the next afternoon, we saw the two larks at almost the same spot, busily feeding in the grass on the shoulder of the highway. Between Hudson and Cedar Falls we saw another Meadowlark. Several people have reported seeing Meadowlarks in this vicinity during the past winter; my records show them to be more common than in other winters.

I have observed Golden-crowned Kinglets around the college campus in Cedar Falls all during the past winter. I have seen a few each winter, usually in December, but I had not before seen so many nor for so long a period.—WINIFRED GILBERT, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

RECENT BIRD BOOKS

THE BOOK OF BIRDS, edited by Gilbert Grosvenor and Alexander Wetmore (National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C., 1937; 2 vols.; cloth, pp. 1-738 of which 204 are in colors, 228 photographs and 17 maps; price, \$5).

The publication of this book marks the completion of one of the most ambitious undertakings of the National Geographic Society—that of presenting in one work colored pictures of all the major species of birds occurring in United States and Canada, with accompanying descriptive text. The bird series, one group of birds at a time, has been appearing in the 'National Geographic Magazine' over a period of several years. No expense has been spared in the project, and the results have been highly praiseworthy. The bird paintings are from the brush of Major Allan Brooks. We have this artist at his best. The bird biographies are written in a brisk, readable style by Alexander Wetmore, T. Gilbert Pearson, Robert Cushman Murphy, Allan Brooks, Henry W. Henshaw and Arthur A. Allen—each man an eminent authority on American ornithology. In addition, there have been special articles on various phases of bird study, as well as photographs by the nation's best bird photographers. It is a series that has exerted a tremendous educational influence among the thousands of 'Geographic' readers. The new book puts all this excellent material into a more convenient, accessible form, in which it will reach other thousands of readers, many of whom would not have access to the magazine.

A rather short descriptive sketch is given each species, setting forth its size, range, prominent habits and characteristics, and including many personal experiences of the authors; 633 species are thus described. The reader will gain much knowledge of the birds and, with an aroused interest, he can consult other works for more complete life histories. The 204 pages in color include 950 individual bird portraits. All are by Major Brooks with the exception of one group of warblers by Louis A. Fuertes reprinted from earlier plates. The photographs are largely by Arthur A. Allen. Among the special articles Francis

H. Herrick's account of the Eagle's nest life, Allen's chapter on hunting with a microphone, and F. C. Lincoln's description of migration and bird-banding are especially noteworthy. The green buckram binding is very sturdy and attractive.

The book is sold at a low cost price, the initial expense of plates, etc. having been previously assumed by the magazine, and the generous Society not wishing to make a profit on its sale. We believe that it offers more value for the money than any other general bird book now on the market, and it deserves a place in every public library. The book is obtainable only from the Society.—F. J. P.

* * * * *

AUDUBON THE NATURALIST, by Francis Hobart Herrick (D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1938; 2nd edition, 2 vols. in one; cloth, total pp. 1013, 118 illustrations incl. 4 colored pls.; price, \$6).

Of the half dozen or more biographies of Audubon which have appeared during the last two decades, several have been highly imaginative and fiction-like—useful in creating an interest in the subject but not to be considered as good biography. Dr. Herrick's 'Audubon the Naturalist', published in two volumes in 1917, laid the foundation upon which all subsequent biographies have been built. His book and Stanley C. Arthur's recent work are the two important biographies of the naturalist that have been produced during the period mentioned. There were not enough copies of the first edition of 'Audubon the Naturalist' to go around. Late-seekers (and the reviewer was one) found that the book was out of print, and both advertising and combing the stocks of dealers in second-hand books failed to uncover an available copy. In the present revival of interest in Audubon, the new edition of Herrick's authoritative work is an event of timely importance.

Dr. Herrick gathered his materials both in Europe and America, and spent years in patient research. His book is a masterpiece of detail and thoroughness. In spite of its length, the reader finds it very interesting and not at all tedious. Audubon's life was richly documented. He left voluminous journals covering almost his entire adult life. He wrote hundreds of letters, and there is a great amount of other data bearing directly or indirectly on his eventful career. Dr. Herrick very skillfully sifted and assembled this material, and in his clear, scholarly style wrote the book that will doubtless stand for all time as our most complete life of Audubon.

Until the publication of this book in 1917, the world did not know the place, date or circumstances of Audubon's birth, which, as shown by the documents discovered by Dr. Herrick, occurred at Les Cayes, Santo Domingo, April 26, 1785. Several recent biographers have been inclined to discredit these documents and have, perhaps for the sake of adding an element of mystery, given credence to the theory that Audubon was the "Lost Dauphin", son of Louis XVI of France. Dr. Herrick devotes 36 pages to a refutation of this theory. With his proof so clearly presented it seems that this matter should not cause further trouble. The book takes up the events of Audubon's colorful life in chronological order: His boyhood in France, with drawing studies under the painter David; his return to United States at the age of 18 and first studies of American birds; his growth to manhood, his marriage, followed by business ventures, nearly all of which were unsuccessful, in various parts of the country; and the arduous work toward, and the final accomplishment of his goal—the production of 'The Birds of America'. His life contains many of the elements of fiction—travel, romance, joy, sadness, failure, success, and a consuming devotion to one purpose—but is much more interesting because of having the virtue of truth.

This second edition is evidently an exact reprint of the first edition of 1917, with a 36-page chapter on the "Lost Dauphin" added, and the bibliography and a few other details brought up to date.—F. J. P.

A New Edition!
IOWA ORN. UNION'S
"Field Check-List"

The last edition of 5000 copies was sold out within a year. Another edition of 5000 has been printed and is ready for distribution. The prices remain the same.

500, \$2.15
 100, 50c
 50 or less, 1/2c each

All orders sent postpaid

Printed on 3 x 5 card, good stock, listing all Iowa birds to be found through the year. Convenient for filing. Have a supply ready for spring so you can put every trip on permanent record.

Send orders to
MISS KATE LA MAR, Secy.
 1231 39th St.,
 Des Moines, Iowa

Out of Doors
With Birds

EMMA F. BYERS

In singing words the author tells the story of her intimate and growing knowledge of birds, and gives pointers for recognizing them. A spring-time addition to your library.

\$1

The Womans Press

600 Lexington Avenue
 NEW YORK, N. Y.

Aristocrat of Binoculars



Hensoldt

Advanced prismatic arrangement
 Elimination of bulk
 Streamline design
 Enormously reduced weight
 Extra large objectives
 Distinct visibility day and night

DIALYT

6 x 30
 6 x 42
 7 x 42
 8 x 50
 7 x 56
 8 x 56

Hensoldt Dialyt binoculars combine maximum light-gathering power with minimum weight, making them the desirable glasses for bird students.

Write for descriptive booklet

Galyt Field Glass, 4 x 40, (non-prismatic) \$30.00

M. HENSOLDT & SONS, INC.

253a BROADWAY

NEW YORK, N. Y.

Welcome to

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL

for your

1938 Iowa Ornithologists' Union
CONVENTION
MAY 6 - 7

● COFFEE SHOP

(Good food—moderately priced)

● DRUG STORE

(Fountain Luncheonette)

● ROOMS

(From \$2.50 single with bath
From \$1.75 single without bath)

HOTEL MONTROSE

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA